



Puppy Tails

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Doodle Dog poked his nose out the front door ever so slightly. Cautiously, yes, but a poke nonetheless. Inch by inch – well, it seemed more like centimeter by centimeter – the little floppy-eared puppy tested to see if a harsh winter wind would whap his nose, and the rest of him, right back into bed. But the more he inched, the more it seemed as though winter itself was taking a nap! Soon every part of the curious puppy, nose, eyes, floppy ears, furry body, four paws and, of course, the long fluffy tail, sat upon the mat just outside the door. Although winter may be snoozing, it didn't seem that spring had quite woken up yet as the breeze wasn't chilly but it wasn't quite warm either. Well, if spring wasn't going to come to him, the little floppy-eared puppy was going to see if he could spot spring coming over the horizon and immediately set off to find the highest place he knew.

Scampering through town and passing by all the usual spaces, Doodle Dog sniffed and whiffed and searched for a perch that would possibly fit the description. No, not the top of the hill in the meadow... not the monkey bars in the playground, nuh-huh, not quite... and nope, not even the rather tall ladder leading up to the diving board of the just-barely-melting lake. None of them would be high enough to see over the meadow, the playground, the lake AND the town itself. Taking a rest in the cool grass of the meadow, Doodle Dog looked straight up at the clouds above him in the nearly-sapphire sky. A little bit of wintry gray still colored the clouds like Easter eggs that couldn't decide which hue they wanted to be! But Doodle Dog knew soon the gray would go away too, leaving behind a brilliant blue. He couldn't exactly call down a cloud to come and tell him what it saw from across the sky, and there were no kites yet floating around for him to bite the string and maybe hitch a ride, but as Doodle Dog watched the gentle breeze blow the fluffy air sheep and pirate ships and foggy train engines past the very tip of the leaves in the tallest of tall trees, the little floppy-eared puppy had an idea.

Quickly making his way to the base of the nearest tree, Doodle Dog looked straight up the pole of bark that stretched toward the sky, higher and higher than the little puppy's eye could even see. From way down there it seemed quite tall indeed! Maybe if Doodle Dog could find a way to climb up it, he could see what the leaves and the clouds saw too. But how would he get up there? Doodle Dog remembered the squirrels that scurried right on up the bark as though their claws were glued into the grooves. He has claws too – maybe that was the way! Backing up slightly, Doodle Dog wiggled his backside to give him momentum and soon the little floppy-eared puppy dashed right on up... to only about as tall as he was! Despite digging in his claws as deeply as possible, Doodle Dog is much heavier than a squirrel and his paws couldn't hold him against the bark. Okay... straight up wasn't the answer. While he nuzzled some stray bark pieces out from between his toes, Doodle Dog considered his options. In the fairytale stories on his bookshelf back at the office, right about now he could call a winged horse to come and give him a lift. Maybe that would work! The floppy-eared puppy barked really loud and wished with all his might. A moment later he opened his eyes and looked at the sky to see if there was a creature in flight. There was, but it was much tinier than he had hoped. A bright red bird swooped into one of the branches above him paying no mind to the four-legged being on the ground below. Hmmmm...

The red bird might not be able to dive down and let Doodle Dog ride on its back, but it did help! The little floppy-eared puppy eyed the series of branches weaving through the leaves above him and creating a sort of ladder like the one from the high dive. He might not be able to go straight up the bark, but maybe, just

maybe if he could make it up one branch at a time he would eventually find his destination. Taking a deep breath, Doodle Dog scampered up the first branch just to the left of him, digging in his claws and catching his balance as he wobbled just a bit. Steady now, the next branch just to the right of him came into view. Up and up he went, one branch at a time, not paying attention to anything other than what was just next. Before he knew it, the little floppy-eared puppy was halfway up the tree! He looked out over the meadow, covered in pretty posies poking up, and could see just past the grassy knoll and almost into town!

Ouch! What was that? While Doodle Dog rested and enjoyed the partial view, something smacked him right on the ear! He looked up to find one of those scurrying squirrels tossing acorns straight at him. Doodle Dog tried to ignore the assault but was suddenly attacked again! The little puppy was getting beamed by a furry critter half his size! Better move along to the next branch and get out of the way... so Doodle Dog continued up and up past the chattering squirrel until he found another open space for looking out, minus the acorn ammo. Now he could see into town and almost over the top of the shops! This view reminded him of being way up in the hot air balloon drifting over the meadow, the trees and the town itself but at least now his paws were firmly planted on something eventually attached to the ground! This rest spot was quite pleasant indeed as instead of a chatty, attacking squirrel, Doodle Dog could hear the chirping of baby birdies settled in a nest a few branches above him. Right here seemed like a nice comfy spot to watch for spring's arrival!